

Flag Football Rules

For the fall 2016 season, the maximum number of players permitted on the field is seven, i.e. we will play 7v7. For the younger age divisions (U8 & U10) each team will be permitted to have one coach on the field for the balance of the season. For the older age divisions (U12 & U14) each team will be permitted to have a coach on the field for the first three games. Beginning with week four, coaches will not be permitted on the field for the older age divisions.

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra point: 1 point (played from the 5-yard line with a run or pass) or 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run or pass)
- Safety: 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line.

Offensive Basics

- A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap.
- Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped.
- Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete possession of the ball.
- A low-profile field cone or beanbag may be used to mark the line of scrimmage.

Running the Football

- The quarterback may only run the ball if they are rushed. Rushing occurs once a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage and enters the backfield
- Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and laterals are not permitted.
- A quarterback may immediately pitch or lateral the ball after receiving the ball (i.e., one motion).
- The 5 yards leading toward the goal line and the 5 yards leading to the midfield first-down line are no-run zones.
- A player receiving a handoff or immediate pitch can pass the ball (halfback pass) from behind the line of scrimmage.
- A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty.

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- The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football.

Receiving the Football

- All players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or immediate pitch.)
- A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football while having at least one foot in bounds.
- If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion.

Passing the Football

- All forward passes must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage. Shovel passes are allowed but must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff or pitch will end the 7-second pass count.

Dead Balls

Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out. If the player is on a break-away (determined by referee) and a flag falls out, the play will not be stopped.
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- The ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- Delay of game.
- A touchdown or safety is scored.
- A pass falls incomplete.
- The ball hits the ground as a fumble. The ball will be spotted at the point of the fumble. One exception to this rule is with the center/quarterback exchange. If a snap is mishandled, the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play.

Punting

On any down a team may elect to "punt" by forfeiting the ball at the opposing team's 5 yard line.

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Defensive Basics

- Teams may run man-to-man or zone defenses.
- Interceptions may be returned.

Rushing the Passer

- All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 7-yard rush line.
- Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier.

Penalties

Referees will call all penalties.

If a penalty happens near the end zone where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.

Defense

- **Encroachment:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal rushing:** (enforced when players start rushing from inside the 7-yard rush line): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Interference:** The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- **Roughing the passer:** The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- **Illegal contact:** (pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing, tackling): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal flag pull:** (before the receiver catches the football): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.

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Offense

- **Illegal motion:** (more than one person moving): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal formation:** (false start, not enough men on the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal pass:** (a pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage or thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of down.
- **Delay of game (30 sec. max):** The first instance is a verbal warning. The second instance the penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Shielding/blocking:** a contact block in which the blockers hands are not crossed and down, that is to say, their hands are in the face of their opponent. (as in the past, the blocker's hands no longer need to be behind his back). The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.
- **Illegal run:** a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage, **unless he is rushed by a defensive player**: The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Intentional grounding:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Offensive pass interference:** (illegal pick play, pushing a defender): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Flag guarding:** (intentional or unintentional use of the arm to prevent the flag from being pulled): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.
- **Illegal use of the hands:** (stiff-arming, blocking): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.
- **Diving:** (intentional): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.